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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

15 April 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
FROM: William W. Wells
Deputy Director for Operations
SUBJECT: MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): The Methodology
of Operational Training

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This article surveys the primary operational training methodologies employed in the Transcaucasus Military District. Chief among these are front and army command-staff exercises upon which the author dwells, discussing their preparation and conduct, the drafting of the concept and the training of commanders and staffs in the exercise. In addition, the conduct of command and staff war games, as well as group problems, is discussed. This article appeared in Issue No. 3 (79) for 1966.

2. Because the source of this report is extremely sensitive, this document should be handled on a strict need-to-know basis within recipient agencies. For ease of reference, reports from this publication have been assigned

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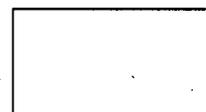
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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR

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SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): The Methodology of Operational Training

SOURCE Documentary Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 3 (79) for 1966 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The author of this article is Colonel N. Pavlikov. This article surveys the primary operational training methodologies employed in the Transcaucasus Military District. Chief among these are front and army command-staff exercises upon which the author dwells, discussing their preparation and conduct, the drafting of the concept and the training of commanders and staffs in the exercise. In addition, the conduct of command and staff war games, as well as group problems, is discussed.

End of Summary

[Redacted] Comment:

The author also co-authored with Colonel N. Pustovalov and Colonel V. Bulatnikov "The Methodology of Preparing and Conducting Command-Staff Exercises and War Games" in Issue No. 2 (81) for 1967 ([Redacted])

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The Methodology of Operational Training
(From the experience of the Transcaucasus Military District)
by
Colonel N. Pavlikov

The essence of changes which have taken place in the forms and methods of operational training does not, in our view, apply so much to the names of the measures carried out as to their inner content. Actually, all the forms of operational training that were employed before the Great Patriotic War exist at the present time, an exception being those maneuvers which appear to be outdated as a higher form of training troops, command cadres, and staffs in connection with the enormous increase of the spatial scope of present-day operations conducted with the employment of nuclear weapons.

Therefore, along with investigation of new forms of operational training, the improvement of existing ones as well as the proper determination of their role in training has acquired great importance.

The main form of the training of commands and staffs remains, as before, front and army command-staff exercises. It is precisely in them that the integrated study and working out of all the most important questions of organizing and conducting a present-day operation are achieved. However, one must keep in mind the fact that the conduct of such exercises entails the expenditure of a large quantity of forces and means. Obviously, therefore, it is desirable to hold such exercises once every two or three years.

It is generally recognized that command-staff exercises should be two-level. Without this it is not conceivable to work out questions of troop control from the standpoint of the basic level being studied: the commander and staff of the front -- in a front command-staff exercise, and the commander of an army and his staff -- in an army exercise. It also is indisputable that two-sided command-staff exercises are more instructive and interesting. They permit the directing body to play out the combat actions of the sides without preconceptions but on the basis of the trainees' decisions, which in turn engenders in the

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participants a spirit of confrontation and a desire to defeat a "real enemy". While recognizing the instructiveness of such exercises, at the same time we do not consider them the only form of operational training desirable in all cases. For example, it is virtually impossible for a military district to conduct a front command-staff exercise as a two-sided exercise. The large spatial scope of combat actions conducted with the employment of nuclear weapons and the limitations of communications means for controlling the exercise sometimes also make the two-sided method undesirable for army exercises.

Therefore, command-staff exercises are most often conducted as one-sided exercises. However, the playing out of combat actions in such exercises is implemented according to the decisions of the trainees. For this a role-playing group is formed from the personnel of the military district staff or the operations group of the staff of an army not participating in the exercise, or sometimes its entire staff, is allocated. In this case it is desirable to conduct a planned command-staff war game with the staff of the army.

We shall examine some questions of preparing and conducting command-staff exercises. As experience shows, in the initial work of preparing an exercise two methods are possible. The first consists in having the director personally determine the initial data, adopt a decision (though it be even a preliminary one), and give instructions to the staff of the directing body as to the procedure for drafting the necessary documents. In the second method the staff of the directing body independently draws up the initial data and rough outlines of the concept, on the basis of which the director adopts a corresponding decision. We give preference to the first method. The staff of the directing body in this case works more purposefully and confidently from the very start.

The question arises, in how much detail should the concept be drafted if the combat actions of the sides are played out only according to the decisions of the trainees? Experience shows that a detailed draft of a concept based on an in-depth analysis of the entire exercise from beginning to end subsequently permits the staff of the directing body to work more systematically and, what is important, to prepare the remaining documents of the exercise (plans, tasks, operational directives, etc.) in a short

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time.

But in this case variants of decisions should not be outlined in the concept, especially when conducting two-sided command-staff exercises, for then, whether they will it or not, the directing body and umpires will be artificially propelling the trainees toward previously worked up variants of decisions, taking them as basic in the playing out of combat actions, and by that very fact hampering initiative.

Incidentally, we note that this applies not only to command-staff exercises. There also are cases when plans are adopted and formulated in advance for short operational problems, and methodical notes on variants of decisions are drafted for directors of group problems. All this becomes known to participants in the training periods and their adoption of decisions becomes a simple formality, which does a great deal of damage to the operational training of generals and officers.

But let us return to the concept of the command-staff exercise. This, like the commander's decision for the operation, should be drawn up on a map with a short explanatory note. In doing this the map should reflect: the position and nature of the actions of the sides at the beginning of the exercise; the concept of the actions in the form of the decisions of the senior commanders and the ensuing task for the formations taking part in the exercise; the order of employment of nuclear weapons by the senior commanders in their zones, commitment of the second echelons or reserves, and dropping or landing of airborne landing forces; and the control posts of the directing body and trainee staffs. In the explanatory note are laid out the themes, training objectives, strength of the staffs brought in for the exercise, a short characterization of the operational-strategic or operational situation at the beginning of the exercise, the concept of the actions of the sides, the combat tasks of trainee formations, the nuclear, chemical, and conventional warheads and other materiel allocated to them, the balance of forces, the stages of the exercise, basic training problems and the approximate time for working them out. To the explanatory note there usually is attached a plan-calendar which basically contains the order of the work of the directing body by stages of the exercise.

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How then is the planning of operations worked out in exercises, and is it necessary in general to draft a plan for the first operation? We do not share the opinion of Lieutenant Colonels N. Afanasyev and L. Mariyev* on the necessity of having prepared in advance a so-called training plan of an operation.

Usually before the beginning of an exercise, the front is given, in the form of a directive or instruction of the General Headquarters of the Supreme High Command such information as is fully adequate for working out the questions of planning an operation in a relatively short time. Practice shows that one and one half to two days is enough to draft the basic documents at two training levels, which along with bringing the staffs to combat readiness can constitute the first stage of the exercise. But this stage is not at all mandatory. A command-staff exercise can begin with combat actions, for example, under conditions of a surprise enemy attack. Troop control in this situation will be implemented not according to a previously drafted plan of operation. It will be conducted according to combat instructions which are quickly prepared and promptly delivered to those who carry them out. The training of commanders and staffs in the course of such an exercise is attained above all by the creation of an instructional situation on the basis of which they make decisions, draft the appropriate documents and implement control.

As experience shows, the basic method of training commanders and staffs in exercises is for the director to work with them at command posts and periodically listen to their decisions and instructions. Here, of course, we do not have in mind listening to extensive reports and cutting off the participants from the exercise for a long time. We are talking about ascertaining the knowledge and skills of the trainees in reporting the situation, drawing up decisions, assigning tasks, etc. It appears to us that for these purposes in the course of the exercise the director must be briefed by the principal personnel assigned to the front headquarters no less than two or three times, and by those assigned to each army (division) level -- once or twice. This will permit the director personally to teach formation commanders and commanders, ascertain their troop control abilities, and identify the strong and weak aspects of operational training.

*Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought", No. 1 (77), 1966, pp. 119-123 ("Suggestions Regarding the Methodology of Command-Staff Exercises", [REDACTED]).

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Working out training tasks with exact observation of operational and sidereal time is at times almost impossible. For example, to study questions of relocating the control posts of a front in mountainous conditions at a rate of advance of about 30 kilometers per day if only to a depth of 200 to 250 kilometers takes at least five days. Naturally it is undesirable to work on these problems over five days when no more than six or seven days are being devoted to the entire exercise.

Therefore, the so-called operational transitions following definite intervals of time are a legitimate occurrence. Experience shows that in a front command-staff exercise there can be two or three such transitions depending on the problems being studied; in an army exercise it seems possible to limit transitions to one or two, or even to do without them, especially if a troop unit is allocated for the exercise.

In resorting to operational transitions it is necessary not just to adopt decisions based on them but also to play out the combat actions of the sides for a certain period of time.

It should be noted that in connection with the above-indicated frequency of conducting command-staff exercises, a very prevalent and effective method of training command cadres and staffs has become the war (command, staff) game. It is precisely in the course of a game, where each participant acts in his own organizational role, that purposeful training is achieved. The relatively short duration of the game, two or three training days, naturally does not permit the director to teach every participant personally. And there is no need for this. What is important is that all the players, being members of a small collective -- the operations group of a front or an army -- perform tasks proper to their assigned duties under the direction of their own commanders and chiefs of staff. In the course of the game the commander generally listens to short reports of different categories of trainees about the situation, an assessment of it, decisions, etc. All the participants brought into such briefings, regardless of whether or not they themselves report, raise the level of their operational training.

As far as group problems are concerned, the strict differentiation of functional duties and the varied specialization of generals and officers of staffs and

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headquarters have led to their losing their importance in operational training. Let us take, for example, a group of generals and senior officers of an army headquarters allocated to participate in an operational assembly of the command personnel of a military district. Along with the commander of the army, the participants are the chiefs of intelligence, engineer troops, chemical troops, communications, the rear services and others. It is perfectly obvious that it is hard for all of them to play the same role, as is envisaged in the method of conducting a group problem. It is possible, of course, to take a different path -- the path of creating groups according to branch arms or special troops, that is, with regard for the specific training of the generals and officers, and conduct training sessions in these groups under the direction of the corresponding chiefs of branch arms, special troops, and rear services of the military district. But in this case the latter will not themselves be instructed. Group problems can be employed only in the study of tactical themes. In the course of these, the knowledge and skills of the trainees which are especially necessary in working out various troop exercises and war games, and in giving practical assistance to troops in the organization and fulfilment of combat training measures, are improved.

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